



US Army Corps of Engineers ®

Programs Division, Military Programs

INFORMATION PAPER

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SUBJECT: Contractor support of PROMIS

1. Issue. Some districts are using contractors to support their PROMIS implementation effort. The Chief of Engineers indicated that use of contractors to get started with PROMIS was acceptable, but the subsequent use of contractor support should be de-emphasized.

2. Facts. Currently, nine districts are using contractor support to load or maintain their projects in PROMIS. Most of this effort is spread among three contractors. They are PMC Solutions from Albuquerque, Luster National from San Francisco, and SAIC from San Diego. The level of effort by the contractors among the nine districts can be generally grouped into three categories: training only, initial loading, and loading plus maintenance.

3. Discussion.

a. Two districts are using contractors to train project managers and project delivery teams in the use of scheduling software and PROMIS. After the training, the project teams are responsible for data entry into PROMIS. Since formal PROMIS training occurred during initial system fielding two years ago, this service is necessary for the implementation of the PMBP. Four districts are using contractors to initially load projects into PROMIS and to train project delivery teams in the subsequent use of the system. These districts plan to use district resources to maintain the projects once their initial PROMIS implementation is complete.

b. Three districts are using contractors to load and maintain data in PROMIS and plan to keep using contract support for this service throughout the project lifecycle. This service generally includes initial project loading of PROMIS data, development of the project schedule using PROMIS and scheduling software, cost loading of that schedule and monthly updates of the schedule. This model treats the scheduling component of project management as a technical service. In no instances were contractors making project decisions, rather they were providing data for decision support to the project team and district leadership. The districts using this model have recognized that there is a significant amount of non-management effort that must be performed on each project in order to get value out of the data in the system. The district leadership has made a conscious decision that it is more important for their PMs to be managing projects and activities than for them to be entering information about those activities into PROMIS. Depending on the contract, typical costs for these services are between \$500-1000 per project per year, and some districts consider this a bargain at twice the price.

c. With some PMs currently managing up to 40 projects concurrently, the volume of data entry necessary to keep the projects up to date in PROMIS takes too many eyes off of projects. These districts have already realized the need for budget analysts to assist PMs with the CEFMS end of project management. At the

project level, the benefits from this service include project-level leading indicators such as Earned Value metrics. At the district level, the training burden for PMs is reduced while the consistency of project data improves. This eventually will allow the district to get a better grasp of workload, and will also unlock the door to improved performance measures.

d. There is a parallel between this issue and how our construction contractors manage their schedules. Most of our contracts require our contractors to submit up-to-date cost loaded schedules as part of their monthly payment request. Many of these contractors routinely pay consultants to build these schedules and keep them current. The scheduling software can be complex, but more importantly, the actual data entry is seen as a management support task. The scheduling consultants are not making the decisions, but they are providing valuable information for decision support to the contractor.

4. Recommendation. The use of contractors to load project level data in PROMIS is a business decision that should be left to the local commanders. Based on the local organizational structure, a PM with many projects could be rapidly consumed by data entry tasks. Across USACE, these tasks are currently being performed by PMs themselves, management support personnel within the PM organization, or by management consultants. Since the number of projects per PM varies greatly by district and even by program within a district, the district commander should retain the flexibility to maintain the project data in the most efficient way.

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